

Hamilton Development Corporation
October 31, 2014

The Hamilton Development Corporation met at Hamilton Town Hall at 7:30 a.m. on Friday, October 31, 2014 with Brian Stein, Rick Mitchell, Anthony Nickas, Dave Carey, Bill Gisness present. DPW Director Bill Redford also present.

Call to order

Brian Stein called the meeting to order at 7:30 a.m.

Discuss fall planning session progress for the Hamilton/Wenham Village

Bill Gisness summarized HDC's Powerpoint presentation for the upcoming fall planning session. He suggested including educational information about zoning by-laws identifying limits and approval process. No recommendations will be made to change height or density, the HDC is interested in the Town allowing mixed use downtown. The Willow Street overlay by-law allows for multi-family housing and residential use over commercial use which the current business zone does not allow. There could potentially be more height within Willow Street overlay district and different setbacks.

Discussion ensued about introduction at the planning session outlining what the meeting is trying to accomplish and role of HDC and attendees in the process. The presentation will include concise background information on HDC, and history leading up to the meeting: 1992 Hamilton plan, 2004 Master Plan, 2009 Economic Development charrette, and 2014 Hamilton Wenham Village plan. All of these recommended infrastructure investments including wastewater treatment, bikeways, sidewalks, parking, zoning, etc. to support expanded uses in the business district.

Activities described will be kickoff of HDC organization in 2013 to foster economic progress in Hamilton business district, 2013 grant from MAPC used for meetings and to draft recommendations for downtown zoning, 2014 HDC purchased 59/63 Willow Street where future use will be determined by input from the community and Land Use boards/Selectmen, and 2014 conceptual planning for wastewater management.

The purpose of the planning meeting is to get public input on what the residents would like to see or not see in the downtown. Some of the goals and opportunities under consideration include: promote business uses that stimulate the Hamilton Wenham village, add value to village area land to promote quality of life and pedestrian friendly

environment, promote uses that require higher water usage and wastewater output for a wider mix of uses (i.e., hair salons, restaurant, bakery, tea house, multi-family housing, etc.), recent properties have been purchased for uses that do not promote village use (i.e., Dodge Tree Service and T M Landscaping), promote a housing cycle (enable young workers, downsizers and empty nesters to live in Hamilton before or after children are through school system) for a healthy tax base for a predominantly residential community, promote some housing mix in village area as voiced during Pirie property purchase discussion, promote variety of housing types as proposed in 2004 Master Plan (i.e., apartment, condominium, +55 housing, and senior housing), look for ways to increase tax revenue, provide parking solutions.

Also introduced will be goals to increase public awareness of the business district potential, hear from the public on important issues, zoning by-law recommendation to the Planning Boards in Hamilton and Wenham for April Town Meeting approval, 59/63 Willow Street land use and development recommendations, develop design guidelines, and with public input develop overall vision for the business district.

HDC will speak to area study that matches MAPC information, business zone including Hamilton and Wenham as well as Willow Street overlay district. Brief discussion will address business zone by-law and uses allowed (i.e., 20,000 square foot minimum lot size, non-conforming lots downtown, lot coverage is 75% maximum, setbacks are to match adjacent building or 25' setback and 50' from centerline of road (some businesses downtown do not have any setback), 35' height relative to sloped and flat roofs, parking is 1 space for every 300 square feet for business use, one parking space for every dwelling unit (i.e., option to park within 200' of building). Uses allowed in the Willow Street overlay district include: retail, restaurant, multi-family residential, mixed use residential and commercial. Also addressed will be lot size as well as coverage and setbacks, height. Parking is the same as business use but parking spaces can be shared between business and residential (i.e., day and night). Overlay by-law special permit and site plan review are required in development process.

Photos will be shown of recent projects and zoning by-laws (i.e., Timeless Interiors building that is 25' tall and two stories so a 35' building would be one story higher). Also to be discussed will be architectural details including different types of gables, roofs, clapboards, colors and where a building sits relative to the sidewalk. Also analyzed will be where building entries face on street or pedestrian walkway. Examples will be the Community Package Store that is 30' tall to roof ridge with mixed use of commercial and residential as well as Talbot's where both buildings have entries that do not face the street.

Dialog will address one story retail buildings in the downtown area that should probably stay as they are due to historical value. Photos will be used to foster discussion with the public about whether or not masonry or mansard roofs should be used downtown for architectural character. Also noted will be the scale of new buildings in the downtown including the Acord Food Pantry building with mixed use, and how setbacks and parking elements are used. A sample site plan of a typical lot that is 40' wide by 80' deep and how parking and septic relate to the plan and proposed square footage (i.e., three stories) will be analyzed. The HDC will present three dimensional models of potential streetscapes from Railroad Avenue to Linden Street and Willow Street to Bay Road and ideas for 59/63 Willow Street. Discussion ensued about information from the Cecil Group site plan workshop that was done relative to parking and green space downtown being included in meeting to foster understanding about how to plan and the outcome. As well as the Cecil Group recommendations about areas in the downtown where parking and mixed use could occur.

Gisness suggested that the second planning session should be a hands-on workshop with attendees talking about the best location for housing, pedestrian walkways and retail (i.e., Willow Street versus just Railroad Avenue and Bay Road). HDC reiterated that the first planning session will focus on providing an overview with the second session encouraging attendee participation. Discussion addressed how consensus is important at the end of the first planning session so zoning by-law recommendations can be given to the Planning Board and Town Meeting. The HDC will summarize what it has heard people are interested in seeing downtown especially for the Willow Street property rental space (i.e., neighborhood market, sign painters, cabinet furniture maker's showroom, artist studio/gallery, personal fitness trainer, bakery, hair salon, day spa). Many of these uses cannot be done due to septic system limitations. Discussion was on how HDC can control tenants coming in relative to water use requirements.

Also presented will be numbers associated with the value development in the downtown could bring to the Town. Much of this would be provided by ULI. Discussion addressed how the Hamilton tax rate is \$17.40 per \$1,000 for assessed property. So 59 Willow Street house is assessed at \$318,000 with taxes of \$5,537. Discussion ensued about potentially putting 10 apartments on the 59 Willow Street land, the building value would be \$5 million with property taxes of \$87,000 and 20 apartments for a \$10 million property the taxes would be \$174,000. People likely to be interested in apartments would be younger or older and not have children using the school system. Apartments could be clustered in the downtown which would support the Meals Tax money and bring other revenue to retail establishments in the area.

The HDC also considered whether or not it should present information from Wright Pierce's presentation on wastewater relative to aquifer overlay protection district in Wenham on Main Street and Bay Road in Hamilton, and if the watershed area should be protected with a shared septic system. It was agreed that support from the community on development in the downtown would have to be identified first before moving discussion toward septic need in the area. Discussion reiterated how the first planning session sets the expectation about what will occur at follow-on sessions and provides the opportunity for input and constructive criticism. Dave Carey will facilitate the session. As part of the wrap up of the session, links will be provided to attendees on how they can research information from previous studies done (i.e., Cecil Group).

59/63 Willow Street property discussion

Six people have looked at the site as an artist studio. Discussion was with DPW Director Bill Redford about the potential to use prisoners to freshen up the Willow Street retail space in December. The HDC will put the scope of work together primarily cleaning the basement and painting it white, new subfloor on the first floor and installing carpeting or vinyl flooring. One potential tenant, a carpenter/furniture maker, was interested in doing the improvement work himself. Other potential tenants are interested in the shelving and wood floor. The shoe repair machines were taken out of the site by a scrap metal company at no charge to the HDC. Stein will contact Town Counsel about status of trees slated for removal on property. Discussion ensued about how the HDC could notify downtown residents about the planning session and how the Corporation did not have a large list of emails to contact people. Also, that new Information Specialist developing a Town blog could prove useful for publicizing HDC's planning sessions.

Mitchell moved at 8:30 a.m. to adjourn. Carey seconded the motion. VOTE: Unanimous.

Respectfully submitted by Jane Dooley, Minutes Secretary

ATTEST: _____
Clerk